

**GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT
JUSTIFICATION NARRATIVE
FOR
60 ACRES NORTH OF LA MIRADA**

This is a General Plan Amendment request to change the Land Use Element of the General Plan from Rural Neighborhoods to Commercial and Urban Neighborhoods/Resort/Tourism on an approximately 60 acre property along Pima Road north of the La Mirada Center at the northeast corner of Pima and Pinnacle Peak Roads. The Urban Neighborhoods designation is being requested specifically to accommodate an assisted living use, which requires R-5 zoning, and/or patio/townhomes, and the Resort/Tourism designation to allow tourist accommodations. The remaining approximately 30 acre parcel owned by the applicant at the immediate southeast corner of Pima and Happy Valley is not proposed to be changed from Rural Neighborhoods, although a future rezoning is anticipated to allow an acre lot community. The property is surrounded by one- and five-acre residential development to the north, east and across Pima Road on the west, and the commercial shopping center/office complex to the south.

Scottsdale's General Plan acknowledges that the General Plan is a guide to decision-making and not a rigid, static document. The General Plan states that "Making long-range decisions means that issues need to be periodically readdressed to reflect new or emerging circumstances," and that "flexibility is needed to meet the overall objectives." (pp. 11-12) The General Plan also states that it is designed to be "a broad, flexible document that changes as the community needs, conditions and direction change." (p. 17) This is an area in which changed conditions due to the intensity of commercial development at the intersection of Pima and Pinnacle Peak and the heavy volumes of fast-paced traffic along Pima Road make it necessary to amend the General Plan to accommodate uses along Pima Road in this area that are more compatible with these conditions, that are less affected by their impacts and that can serve to buffer adjacent residential uses from these impacts. The General Plan also anticipates the growth of the City's resort industry with "increased diversity in location and orientation for most new facilities." (p.37) This entire north Scottsdale area is underserved with only two resorts and this Pima and Pinnacle Peak location is ideal for additional resort accommodations with its proximity to Pinnacle Peak and the Preserve as well as to shopping, dining and Old West attractions.

The proposed General Plan Amendment offers the opportunity to locate additional commercial services adjacent to the La Mirada Center then to transition with resort, assisted living or patio/townhome development between the commercial and lower density residential uses to the north and east. The intersection of Pima and Pinnacle Peak is designated as an Activity Center on the Character and Design Element of the General Plan. According to the General Plan, "Activity Centers include major mixed-use areas that are smaller than the employment cores, but larger than neighborhood centers." (p. 44) The proposed land use change is consistent with this Activity Center designation and with the existing pattern of development surrounding the intersection, which transitions on three corners from intense commercial uses to higher density residential or a church to lower density residential.

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The aerial above shows the intersection of Pinnacle Peak Road and the La Mirada Center. On the south side of Pinnacle Peak Road both commercial corners are surrounded by transitional higher density residential uses, including patio and townhomes. The La Mirada Center is buffered from the adjacent R1-190 neighborhood by a park and large church use to the east. The requested General Plan Amendment would allow the same development pattern to continue on the northeast corner of Pima and Pinnacle Peak north of the La Mirada Center. This General Plan Amendment would allow for additional commercial and transitional uses to the north, which would be consistent with the established development pattern in the vicinity of the intersection and would avoid the incompatible relationship of five-acre lots immediately adjacent to an intense commercial use, placed within a relatively narrow corridor between Pima Road and the eastern boundary of the property.

GENERAL PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS

- **Value Scottsdale's Unique Character and Lifestyle**

The character and lifestyle of Scottsdale and this area would be enhanced by appropriate transitioning of land uses from the intensity of the Activity Center uses at the intersection of Pima and Pinnacle Peak and along the Pima Road corridor. The scenic corridor along Pima Road will preserve the desert character and setting of this part of north Scottsdale. The broader range of uses as well as housing types planned adjacent to the commercial center would be consistent with the existing development pattern and established character of the area. A resort or other tourist accommodation use would strengthen the Scottsdale "resort lifestyle" image and appeal of the area.

- **Character and Design Element.**

As has been discussed above, the intersection of Pima and Pinnacle Peak is designated on the Character and Design Element as an Activity Center, allowing for a broad mix of uses at an appropriate location within the surrounding Rural Desert Character area. The General Plan itself states that "Character can cross land uses and zoning to include community regions containing a mixture of housing, employment, cultural, educational, commercial and recreational uses." (p. 43) The inclusion of additional commercial services and the provision of an opportunity for a resort, assisted living facility and/or other housing types in this area can add to rather than detract from the rural desert character of the area by the use of appropriate design guidelines. Residential, resort and commercial style and design can reflect the desert setting and the proposed uses can provide a stabilizing transition from the intensity of the Pima-Pinnacle Peak commercial intersection. As the General Plan states, "Thus, from a 'character' perspective, the challenge is not so much to avoid high density as it is to ensure aesthetic appeal." (p. 40) The aesthetic appeal of the area will be maintained and enhanced with compatibly designed, desert-oriented, upscale commercial and residential uses.

The proposed General Plan Amendment to the Land Use Element supports a number of goals articulated in the Character and Design Element. The proposed Land Use designations are responsive to the specific context of the surrounding neighborhood and contribute to the established character of this location. The scenic corridor streetscape enhances the visual setting and blends into the character of the surrounding desert area. The scenic corridor and preservation of wash areas will result in the retention

of mature landscape plant materials consistent with the goals of this element of the General Plan.

- **Land Use Element.**

The proposed General Plan Amendment is consistent with the stated Goals and Approaches of the Land Use Element. The proposed Land Use designations encourage the transition of land uses from the designated activity area to less intense surrounding areas and maintain a balance of land uses that support a diverse mixture of housing and leisure opportunities as well as the economic base needed to secure community revenue resources. There are no assisted living facilities in this area, and this use would serve existing residents who wish to remain in the neighborhood as their housing needs change as well as family members of area residents. The last resort built in north Scottsdale was the Four Seasons and the area would be well-served by additional tourist accommodations.

The proposed General Plan Amendment also furthers the citywide land use policy of ensuring that neighborhood edges transition to one another with appropriate land uses and a development pattern reflective of the character of the surrounding area. The established transitional use pattern around the intersection supports extension of the same transitional use pattern north of La Mirada. The proposed residential development will be well-integrated into the surrounding area and provide a reasonable buffer between commercial activities and the adjacent neighborhood. This is a location contiguous to existing development at which infrastructure and City services are readily available. The proposed land use change maintains a desirable diverse mixture of housing and services in the area.

• **Support Economic Vitality**

The additional commercial acreage and potential for a resort will contribute to both the sales and property tax bases and provide additional services as well as City revenues to support them in the area and citywide.

- **Economic Vitality Element.**

The proposed General Plan Amendment advances the Economic Vitality goal of sustaining the long-term economic well-being of the City through providing additional commercial services and tax revenues. The provision of the opportunity for a resort strengthens the City's tourism image, which is the first stated goal of the Economic Vitality Element. The proposed commercial area helps maintain a diversity of businesses within the community to support resident and visitor needs. The location of

commercial and resort uses contributes to the synergy of this Activity Center as well as to its long-term economic sustainability.

- **Enhance Neighborhoods**

The transitional uses will buffer and protect residential neighborhoods to the north and east. The opportunity for different housing types like those developed to the southeast and west of the commercial centers along Pima and Pinnacle Peak will enhance neighborhood diversity in the area. The property immediately south of Happy Valley along Pima will remain Rural Neighborhoods and allow for the development of a high quality acre-lot community that will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods.

- **Community Involvement Element.**

The applicant intends significant neighborhood outreach with individual and group contacts designed to resolve the land use conflicts that have previously occurred relative to this property. This proactive outreach will be initiated early in the process and will also be designed to engage as many citizens as are interested in keeping with the goals of the Community Involvement Element.

- **Housing Element.**

The vision statement of the Housing Element calls for housing options to include a “wide range of opportunities for people living and working in Scottsdale, people at different life stages, income levels, and social and physical needs.” (p. 95) This proposal will offer additional housing choices in the area to serve these differing needs. The assisted living use will meet specialized housing needs not currently served in this area. These alternative housing types are being provided in a mature neighborhood, contributing to the goal of providing a variety of housing options that both blend with the character of the surrounding community and create additional “live, work, and play” opportunities that reduce trips, allow economic expansion and increase overall quality of life.

- **Neighborhoods Element.**

The proposed General Plan Amendment meets the Neighborhoods Element goals of enhancing and protecting diverse neighborhoods and promoting context-appropriate development in an established area of the community. The potential for an assisted living facility also meets the goal of encouraging the integration of a variety of housing that supports independent living and services for all age groups and those with special needs.

- **Open Space**

Open space will be provided both within the scenic corridor and in areas within individual developments.

- **Open Space and Recreation Element.**

The provision of the Pima Road scenic corridor preserves natural open space, enhancing the experience of the desert as well as expanding the trails system in the area.

- **Preservation and Environmental Planning Element.**

The request is consistent with the Preservation and Environmental Planning Element of the General Plan because significant open space will be preserved, the scenic corridor will enhance Pima Road and sensitive development under ESLO will assure compatibility with the desert character of north Scottsdale.

- **Seek Sustainability**

The goals of sustainability and effective management of resources are served by developing what has become the last vacant, in-fill parcel in the Pima and Pinnacle Peak vicinity. The development will use existing infrastructure and add significant amenities to the area.

- **Cost of Development Element.**

The proposed development is consistent with the Cost of Development Element of the General Plan because it provides additional housing, resort and commercial opportunities in an area with existing infrastructure and contributes to the property and sales tax bases to sustain services being provided. Development under the proposed land use designations will also provide its own infrastructure to serve all uses as well as participate in Pima Road dedication and improvement.

- **Growth Area Element.**

There is no impact of the proposed General Plan Amendment on the Growth Area Element of the General Plan other than to develop vacant properties in areas where there is existing infrastructure.

- **Public Services and Facilities Element.**

This General Plan Amendment is consistent with the Public Services and Facilities Element because it provides additional commercial services and housing opportunities in an area of the City already well-served by public services and facilities and its positive revenue impacts will help enhance and sustain these services and facilities.

• **Advance Transportation**

Pima Road functions as a high volume, high speed expressway in this area and limited points of access to the proposed types of development will maintain this expressway functionality. The commercial uses will take advantage of pass-by traffic rather than bringing significant traffic to the area and pedestrian connections between proposed uses will advance the transportation goal of reducing reliance on the automobile.

- **Community Mobility Element.**

The proposal is consistent with the Community Mobility Element goals of relieving traffic congestion, by providing services convenient to area residents, and of emphasizing live, work and play land use relationships.

Proposed General Plan Land Use Map

